RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Quarterly

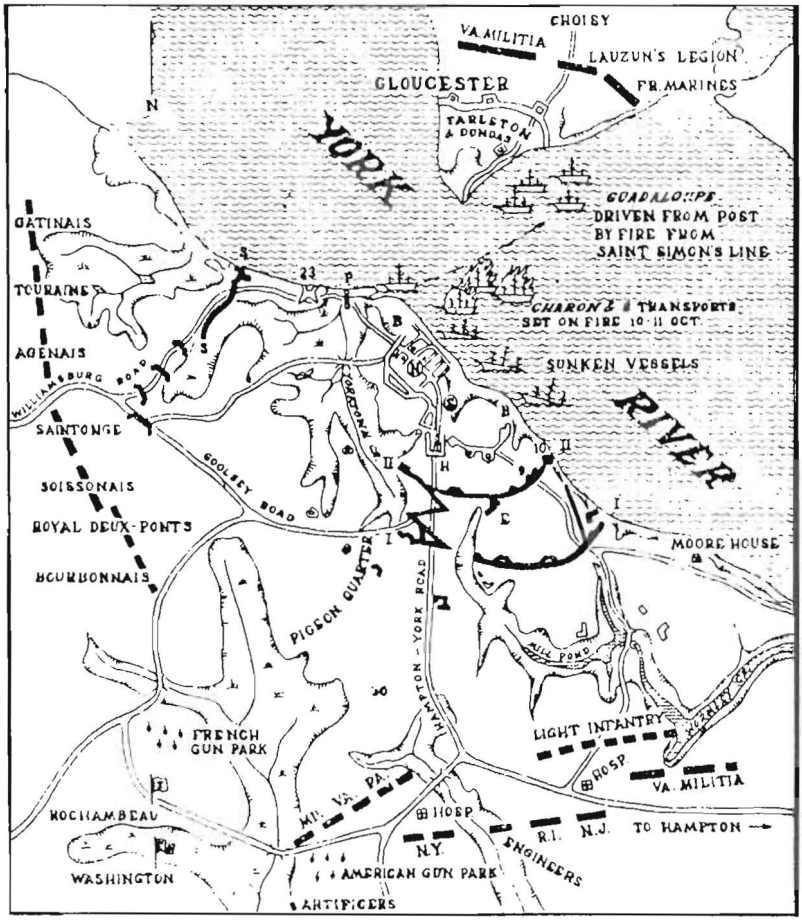
VOLUME XIII No. 3 SUMMER 1983

THE SURRENDER AT YORKTOWN

19 October 1781

As Reported by Radio

By Thomas Kieran Egan ©1981



YORKTOWN SIEGE, 1781

INTRODUCTION

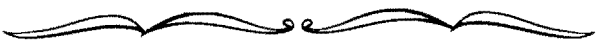
The Surrender at Yorktown — 19 October 1781

(As selected patriotic music fades) October 19th —— today —— is the 200th anniversary of the surrender at Yorktown. General George Washington did not know it at the time, but General Cornwallis's defeat was the end of the last battle of our War for Independence. To honor those who risked so much —— paid so much —— for our freedom, we offer the following presentation by the Ann Story Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Rutland Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Publications Committee of the Rutland Historical Society.

It is a play based on people and events from our American history. It was researched, written and copyrighted by Tom Kieran Egan. In order of their principal parts (in classic, radio-traditional style, some play more than one role), the actors are: Brian Pendleton —— Robert Stafford ——Tom Egan —— Kyran McGrath —— Michael Austin —— Allen Buckland. Penny-whistle in the sound effects by Charlotte McCray —— others from the sound libraries of Radio Stations WHWB and WSYB in Rutland, Vermont, who produced this program jointly.

...and now "The Surrender at Yorktown —— 19 October 1781 —— as Reported by Radio"

(Penny-whistle/drum introduction ——)



THE SURRENDER AT YORKTOWN

RADIO REPORTER: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen of our radio audience. This broadcast of this historic occasion is coming to you from Yorktown, on the banks of the York River, in the State of Virginia. This is Perley Prescott, your radio reporter from Radio Station LBTY in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

When I was told to get down here to cover this momentous event, arrangements were begun to make it possible for this broadcast to reach all 13 states and the Republic of Vermont. If our engineers have been able to accomplish this considerable feat in just two days, we may now be in touch with the largest audience in history —— just as so much history is being made right here at this very moment, today, October 19, 1781.

So, here it is: We are witnessing the first time in history that an entire British field army has ever surrendered. They are doing it right now —— I'm actually watching it take place right now —— and I'll describe it for you as it moves along —— but I can't resist making the comment that it looks as if our country —— our country —— the United States of America —— may well be more than just a brave dream!

First, a little background: I was back at our capital at the end of August when Generals Washington and Rochambeau arrived. Not a very large number of Philadelphians showed up to greet them. Our troops straggled through —— I guess that's an honest word for it —— They straggled through Philadelphia in groups of different sizes —— There never were very many in any one unit —— and, I must say, they didn't look very soldier-like, very military. Of course, they'd been through a lot of rough living —— and for a long time, too. And, they wanted money. And, as justified as their demands were, that was enough for the many tories in the capital to speak out against the "Folly of the Rebels" —— as they put it. Well, those were very negative days —— just about a month and a half ago. But today, right out in front of me at this very moment, stand the same "stragglers", but now they're the victors. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, those long-suffering men are now the victors!

I think it best to leave this background story —— We'll get back to it (no pun intended) —— We'll get back to it from time to time —— and give you the picture as it is right here on the Yorktown Battlefield.

I'm broadcasting from a platform —— at the end of a ramp —— that leads from the ground up to where I stand about four feet above the heads of the onlookers in

front and around me. I don't know, really, if General Washington's engineers made this thing just for our use —— or whether these things serve as sort of lookouts in bad weather. You see, there's only one small window to look through —— makes it hard for me and my assistants —— I'll introduce Gideon and Noah to you later —— to look out at the same time. But there's a door up here at the end of the ramp and, by keeping it closed, we can eliminate the noise from the outside. And is it noisy! I'm sure, with the wagons clattering by —— when the French answer the American cheers —— when the drums try to match the fifes —— Well, you'd never be able to hear me. And I'M HERE TO BE HEARD!

Out front is what is known as the Hampton Road —— That is the name —— isn't it, Noah? —— Yes —— Well, there was a lot of chopping and digging around here because, as I understand it, this is where the Americans and French built the rings of trenches and redoubts that grew tighter and tighter on Cornwallis —— that's Lord Cornwallis, the English general —— until he surrendered.

This whole surrender business, ladies and gentlemen, from what I heard since I arrived here —— is quite a story. I'm not referring to the spectacle that's taking place out front —— Yes, that *is* history with a capital H —— but there's a very, very interesting story in some of the background —— some of the behind-the-scenes dickering that went on in the past two days. Here's as much as I've learned so far: Last Wednesday —— the day before yesterday —— an English drummer began to beat what is called a "parley" —— I suppose that's some sort of a military drum signal for a conference. It was about 9:30 in the morning —— Wednesday morning. Just about the time that the American and French —— probably the Americans —— got to understand the meaning of the drumming, an English lieutenant (Correct me, Gideon, if I go wrong in any of this) —— an English lieutenant appeared with a bit of white cloth held aloft —— There are various stories about what the cloth was —— including some unmentionable —— It's pretty well agreed that the frothy bit of white was at the end of a sword or sabre. An American stepped forward and blindfolded the Englishman and led him to the staffs of Generals Washington and Rochambeau. The message was that Lord Cornwallis requested 24 hours of truce to work out terms of surrender. General Washington's reply was to grant Cornwallis only two hours to put together his proposal. At the same time, a rider took off for Philadelphia with the great news of what was to come —— what is really happening at this moment. I got word of this Wednesday night —— just as I was doing a sort of review story about the $20,000 that was raised, through Rochambeau's war chest, to pay the American soldiers. Of course, I got right out of the capital yesterday, and good people —— and good horses —— got me here in time to do the necessary behind-the-scenes visiting to be as ready as possible for today's ceremony and broadcast.

I was able to get into the home of a Mrs. Moore in Yorktown just as the negotiations were winding up late last night. There was one rather sharp exchange between the two English Commissioners —— Colonel —— let me see, I have their names right here —— Noah, please pass that pouch to me —— Thank you, Noah, —— Yes —— Here it is —— Oh, yes —— There was Colonel Thomas Dundas for the English —— and a Major Alexander Ross —— also for the English. The allies had a French officer —— Viscount de Noailles —— and Colonel John Laurens for the Americans. I was able to tape this exchange —— really, a clash —— between the English and American colonels. Again, Noah, will you help me? —— Yes, that's it —— Bring it right over here —— That's good —— Fine! They were arguing, ladies and gentlemen, about Article 3 of the surrender agreement. I think it's Major Ross —— That's right, it *was* Ross who did the arguing; Colonel Dundas remained quiet —— So, here's the argument:

MAJOR ROSS: "This is a harsh article!"

COLONEL LAURENS: "Which article?"

RADIO REPORTER (cutting in fast): That was Colonel Laurens answering Ross.

MAJOR ROSS: "The troops shall march out with colors cased and drums beating a British or German march!"

COLONEL LAURENS: "Yes, sir. It is a harsh article."

MAJOR ROSS: "Then, Colonel Laurens, if such is your opinion, why is it part of Article 3?"
COLONEL LAURENS: "Your question, Major Ross, compels an observation which I would have gladly suppressed. You seem to forget, sir, that I was one of the capitulants at Charleston —— where General Benjamin Lincoln —— after a brave defense of *six* whole weeks —— in open trenches —— by a very inconsiderable garrison —— against the English army —— and fleet —— (pauses) —— and when your lines of approach were within pistol shot of our field works —— was refused any other terms for his gallant garrison than marching out —— WITH OUR COLORS CASED AND DRUMS *NOT BEATING A GERMAN OR ENGLISH MARCH!"*
MAJOR ROSS: "But my Lord Cornwallis did not command at Charleston."
COLONEL LAURENS: "There, sir, you extort another declaration. It is not the individual that is here considered. It is the nation. This remains an article —— or I cease to be a commissioner!"
MAJOR ROSS: "Well, I must say —— "
RADIO REPORTER (cutting into Ross): There, ladies and gentlemen of our vast radio audience, is a sample of some of the emotion that was part of the negotiations that have gone on since last Wednesday. About this music business, I think there's a story behind this little behind-the-scenes quarrel you just heard. It may be —— and this, of course, is just my guess, that the English may not have liked American use of an English melody to our very familiar "Yankee Doodle". Perhaps, at Charleston, there may have been a bit of petulance which said, " —— and, if you choose to play martial music, play something of your own creation." —— or, perhaps a more specific intention: "As you surrender to us, we don't want to hear any defiance like the playing of 'Yankee Doodle'." Whatever the English reason for that provision at Charleston —— and the English are very fussy about such formalities —— it now looks like our Colonel Laurens made them march to their own tune (again folks, no pun intended). I can't report to you what music the English have selected for their surrender because German troops are passing us —— I assume the English will pass by later. Gideon, can you identify that group that's now coming into view?
GIDEON: Those fellers are called Yoggers —— or Joggers. They're German all right, but that's an English officer at the head of them. That's an English captain in front of those 60 or 70 Jogger Germans. Those Germans come from different parts of Germany, but they call themselves by those other names. They're marchin' like this is a parade —— don't they?!
RADIO REPORTER: Thank you, Gideon. They certainly do! Even on that rutted road out front, this German unit makes this look like anything but a surrender. In one sense, folks, I resent their strutting, but, at the same time, I can't help but admire the proud way they carry themselves.

It just occurs to me that I haven't told you much about our own troops out front —— and the French —— They're out there, too. Here's the picture: This part of Hampton-York Road —— south of the Goolsey Road —— runs north and south. On the west side of the Hampton Road —— facing our ramp and platform —— our raised shelter, I should say —— are American troops. On the east side of the road, with their backs to us —— are the French. There's a long line —— I should say, rank —— an almost shoulder-to-shoulder formation —— of Americans facing us —— and the French. The French, of course, are facing the Americans. And the French, too, are almost shoulder to shoulder. Do you get the picture, ladies and gentlemen? And it's between those long, long lines of rather poorly clad Americans and French in gleaming white that the Germans and, later, the English will pass. Our enemy is passing south —— coming out of the town of York. To my left, just barely within view, I can see those blue coats turning to the west where Generals Washington and Rochambeau have their field headquarters. Incidentally, I tried to interview General Washington and General Rochambeau this morning, but their aides-de-camp suggested that, if I get over to their headquarters this afternoon —— sometime around three o'clock —— either one or both generals may be available for an interview. I'm sure that, if this courtesy is

granted, it will be because of the large radio audience —— our entire nation and , of course, the good folks from the little Republic of Vermont.

Now, on the good chance that we may hear from the supreme commanders of our alliance, I have a dependable horse waiting below. I should be able to get to the headquarters very, very quickly. While I'm enroute, I'll turn this microphone over to my capable associate, Gideon Roberts —— I'm trusting that another —— more portable —— microphone is now set up at Headquarters —— Our engineers were working on it this morning —— so it should be ready to go by now.

There's a man —— looks like an old man —— being led by a boy —— They're crossing the line of march —— toward where my horse is tethered. The old man caught my eye because he's walking very tentatively on the uneven surface, but his face is turned to the sky. I can't help but wonder what a blind man sees —— using just his ears —— on an exciting occasion like this.

Noah, do you know who that man is? Do you think you can get him up the ramp to visit with us? Thank you, Noah. Noah Cooper lives —— I should say lived —— in the town of York, and his help has been invaluable because of his knowledge of the area and the local people. While Noah is down among the onlookers, here's a chance to hear from my military expert —— military advisor —— well, someone who knows a lot more about these campaigns than I do. Ladies and gentlemen, I'm grateful to have the assistance of Gideon Roberts of the Republic of Vermont.

As we mentioned earlier —— We repeat for those who may have tuned in later —— Gideon is "on loan" to us —— as it were —— from the staff of General Knox —— General Henry Knox. Is that right, Gideon? Well, General Knox did say to me that Gideon has seen just about as much service as anyone in the entire Continental Army. How long, Gideon, have you served with Knox —— and, of course, with General Washington?

GIDEON ROBERTS: Well, Mr. Prescott, I suppose you could say from the first attack —— the very first attack —— that was made on the King's soldiers. That was way back in May of '75 at the fort at Ticonderoga. I know there was some fightin' at Concord in Massachusetts a few weeks before we captured Fort Ticonderoga —— but some of the fellers I talked to said that they were attacked first —— The English shot at them —— Then they shot back. In our case, we walked right in on them. We started things off —— and we finished the job, too!

RADIO REPORTER: That was way back in '75 —— wasn't it, Gideon? —— Well, we're going to get back to you, Gideon. But right now, the small boy is bringing the blind man who was crossing the road a bit earlier. Thank you, son, for coming up here (Thanks, Noah, for escorting our guests) and good afternoon to you, sir! First —— our young friend: Is this your granddaddy or a rela...?

BOY: (cutting in) Uncle Daniel is my friend. He can't see things right here. Uncle Daniel sees the future. He does!

RADIO REPORTER: Do you see the future, sir?

BLIND MAN: Yes —— I do see the future.

RADIO REPORTER: How about the present —— like today —— Why are you here today?

BLIND MAN: I'm here today because of the drums —— the pipes —— the slow walking horses, the silent cannons, the silent muskets, all these people I hear around me —— I feel the end of this long, long struggle. And this is the end, young sir, I know!

RADIO REPORTER: Do you really know things that we don't know? Do you really see things in the future that would interest our listeners? You know, we're broadcasting to all 13 states and the Republic of Vermont. Please, tell our listeners what you see.

BLIND MAN: I see General Clinton in New York fighting no more. I see a few small —— very small —— very few —— skirmishes south of here. But there will be no more large numbers of men and ships. After today, there will be peace —— peace for awhile.

RADIO REPORTER: Do you believe this, today's, surrender is the end of our Revolution? You do? Well, well —— what does "peace for awhile" mean?

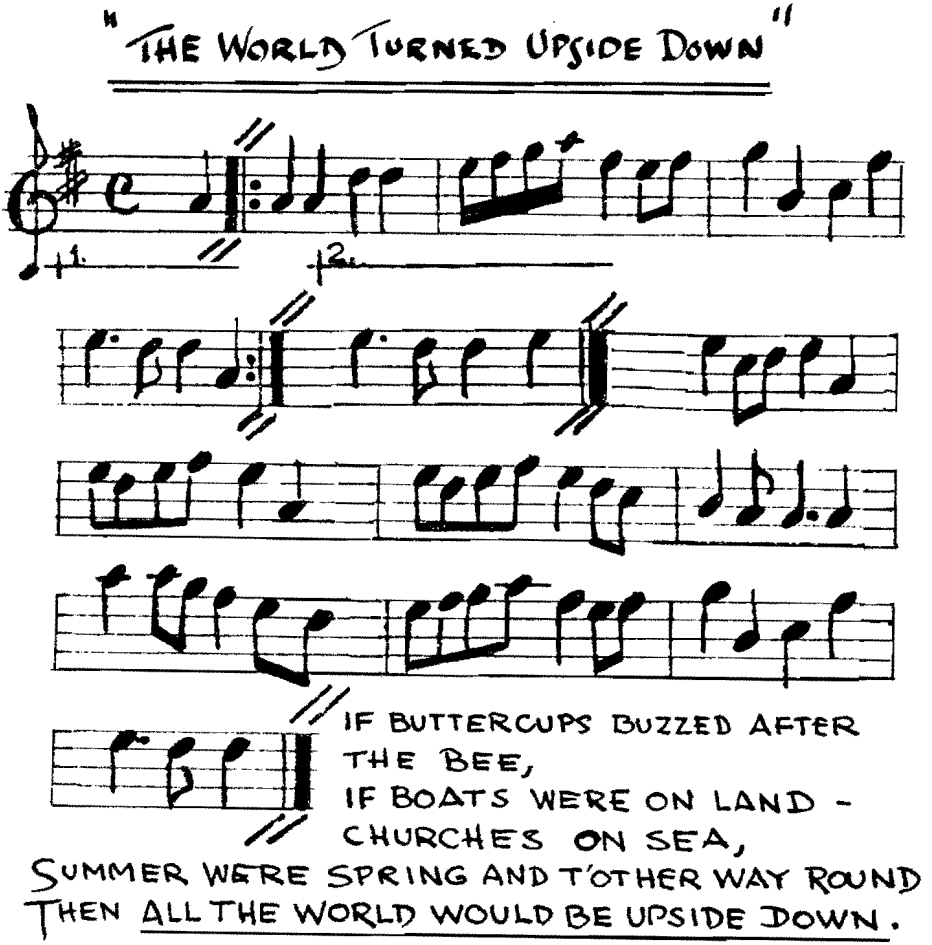
BLIND MAN: England will not fight us again for another 30 years.

RADIO REPORTER: You say we'll have to fight England again in 30 years? Ah —— Ah —— excuse me, Uncle Daniel —— You don't mind me calling you that, do you? —— Would you stay up here with me a bit longer, Uncle Daniel? I'm sure our listeners would like to hear more from you —— You can stay up here too, Sonny. Now, Gideon, can you identify that group of prisoners coming close to us now? They look ——
GIDEON (cutting in): They're Hessians —— Germans. We fought those fellers in New Jersey.
RADIO REPORTER: I must say —— those Germans are marching as if they're the victors! Why, their ranks are dressed off —— They seem to be perfectly abreast as they pass in front of us. The leader of the group and his staff look so splendid that one gets the feeling that they're unbeatable.
GIDEON: Their supply wagons carry fresh uniforms, and they're wearin' 'em today. They do look good, don't they? (afterthought) It's pretty common talk that a lot of those Germans deserted so they can settle here —— Seems some of 'em are farmers —— like I was.
RADIO REPORTER: Is that what you did, Gideon?
GIDEON: Ayuh. After we took Fort Ticonderoga, I went back to my farm in Vermont. But, when I heard that Colonel Knox —— he was colonel then —— was going to haul them cannons from the fort to Boston —— That's 400 miles on the flat —— You should double that for all that haulin' and tuggin' and diggin' over them Berkshires —— or Taconics —— or whatever you call them mountains —— Well, I had a good way with oxen. So, I went back to the fort and volunteered. And that was the beginning of a lot of fightin' and travelin'.
RADIO REPORTER: So that's how you got into General Washington's army —— as a sort of oxen handler?
GIDEON: Well —— it did sorta start that way —— but I like to think that I became one of the Colonel's —— General Knox's —— best cannoneers. You see, I dragged that cannon —— cussed that cannon —— so much —— for so long that I kinda got to love her. She's one of the 50-odd pieces that we Green Mountain Boys captured —— that scared the English out of Boston harbor. My Sally —— that's what I call her —— helped General Washington break that siege —— and the Colonel himself got me started on learning how to use her. We've been together ever since! Say, look at those English comin' along now!
RADIO REPORTER: I must say, ladies and gentlemen, there's a group of prisoners coming through the lines now that certainly doesn't act like soldiers —— at least, not like sober soldiers! How different from the sharp appearance of the Germans who marched by here a few moments ago. Look, Gideon! Those are English soldiers —— aren't they?
GIDEON: They must be. They sure don't march like them Hessians and Joggers —— that's for sure. And they got them scarlet uniforms. But I've never seen soldiers drunk while on parade. We've had a few —— but Colonel Knox'd never permit this kind of thing. And there's another thing: All those red-coats are carrying full packs. See the size of them? I'll bet they don't expect to come back again. That must be it —— Maybe, they're on their way to prison ships and don't give a damn —— beggin' your pardon, sir.
RADIO REPORTER: Gideon, suppose you acted like one soldier to another, do you think it's possible to get one of those Englishmen up here to our microphone? I'm sure our listeners would like to hear his reaction to this turn of events.
GIDEON: It's kinda chancey, Mr. Prescott. One of their officers might see me and not like it. Even our officers might not like it. And I don't think I'm going to get a sober one to come with me —— but —— let me give it a try.
RADIO REPORTER: Sometimes, ladies and gentlemen, we have to take a chance —— to dare the unusual —— to bring you the most complete story. While Gideon is down among the crowd below, I'm going to ask Mr. Noah White, from the town of York, to tell us something about conditions there during the siege. Was there much damage to the town, Noah?
NOAH: Well, let's see now. It was a Tuesday afternoon —— I'm sure it was a Tuesday —— That was a week ago last Tuesday —— Today is Friday, the 19th

—— Last Tuesday was the 16th —— It must have been on the 9th. Yeah, it was the afternoon of the 9th that the shellin' started.
RADIO REPORTER: Could you tell us, Noah, about the damage to the town?
NOAH: Well, I'm gettin' to that. There wasn't much that first afternoon. But the next mornin' it came in from two directions. We heard the English saying that the allies were using more than 40 pieces of artillery. Then, at noon there was a truce. The governor's uncle —— that's Thomas Nelson, Sr. —— his house was the best one in town, and it was just about knocked to pieces —— Well, he got out of town and joined young Tom Nelson, the governor. I tell you this story because, later that day, when they began firing again, a Captain Machin was just about to order his battery to fire when this French general come along with our governor. This young Frenchman —— he was pretty young for a general —— heard later that he was called Fayette, and he was close to General Washington. Well, anyway, this Fayette asked our Governor Nelson where they should aim the gun. I don't know whether it was some sort of an honor to our governor —— or because he knew the town so well. Anyway, he said something like this: "Aim it at that house. That one is mine. Now that my uncle's is ruined, mine is the best one in town. And that's where you'd best find Lord Cornwallis and his English headquarters." And do you know —— they did hit that building, the governor's own house! But Cornwallis was behind the bluffs that overlook the river —— He'll live to fight another day!
BLIND MAN: "He'll live to fight another day!" Aah! That Cornwallis will be the victor another day!
RADIO REPORTER: Uncle Daniel —— are you seeing into the future?
BLIND MAN: Cornwallis will be the victor another day!
RADIO REPORTER: Ladies and gentlemen, for those who may have just joined us, we are broadcasting from the field where Lord Cornwallis, the English general, is surrendering his army just outside the town of York in the state of Virginia. Earlier, we were visited by a blind man who (we are told) can see into the future. So far, Uncle Daniel has told us that today really marks the end of our war for independence from England. I personally think that's a most optimistic view —— in the light of the precarious situation to the south of us —— and the large force of English under General Clinton near New York —— but there's a strange air of conviction when Uncle Daniel speaks that I feel most strongly —— that I must pass along to you as best I can. Uncle Daniel told us that we'd have to fight England again in 30 years —— and now he says that Cornwallis will fight again —— and he'll be the victor! I'm sure you, ladies and gentlemen, share my desire for clarification. Will you tell us more, Uncle Daniel?
BLIND MAN: Cornwallis will never defeat —— England will never defeat —— an American army. England will shrink in power until it will depend upon America for its very survival. But this young nation —— breaking free only today —— will be one of the great powers of the world! But I do see Cornwallis as a victor —— I see a red field between the English forces and a vast bog. It is near a little town called Ballinamuck in Ireland. It is the autumn of 1798 —— 17 years from now —— but the same Cornwallis is the English general in charge. And, once again, there are rebels, with the French lending aid for their freedom. But this time, the French —— and the Irish rebels —— are losers. General Cornwallis's general accepts the surrender of French General Humbert —— and takes French soldiers as "Prisoners of War" —— and slaughters the Irish as "Rebels against the Crown". I see the field —— red with the blood of those butchered rebels —— row by row —— row upon row —— hundreds and hundreds of souls! Oh, it's a great blessing to our young nation that George Washington and our American "Rebels against the English Crown" will not suffer the same fate as the Irish!
RADIO REPORTER: Thank you, Uncle Daniel. While I cringe at the horror you say will befall the Irish at the hands of General Cornwallis, I'm sure everyone in our young nation hopes for the great future you describe with such authority. We are much indebted to you, sir!
GIDEON: Mr. Prescott ——
BRITISH SOLDIER: What' sin here? Where's the grog?
GIDEON: Mr. Prescott ——

Background Music and Sound Effects

1. **Introduction:** Play music (below) as third part of medley: "Yankee Doodle —— Marseillaise —— World Turned Upside Down".
   Instruments: Pennywhistle, plus drum, very lightly.
   Voice: Radio Reporter cuts into the introduction.
2. **"World Turned Upside Down":** English soldier sings lyrics below.
3. **Radio Station Sounds Library:** On cue, provides creaking, closing doors, footsteps, sounds of the crowds, etc.
4. **Finale:** Match-up of crescendos from Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture" with latter half of General Washington's speech.



RADIO REPORTER: I do believe that Gideon has brought us an English soldier! Welcome, sir ——
BRITISH SOLDIER: "If buttercups buzzed —— after the bee ——
(singing) "If boats were on land —— churches on sea ——"
RADIO REPORTER: Would you say a few words to our audience? What is the name of your outfit?
BRITISH SOLDIER: "If summer were spring —— and t'other way 'round ——
(singing) "Then all the world would be upside down!"
GIDEON: He won't be much good, Mr. Prescott —— I'll bring him back.
RADIO REPORTER: That's all right, Gideon. Maybe it wasn't such a good idea. As he goes, will you and Noah help our little friend and Uncle Daniel down the ramp? I'm leaving soon for General Washington's headquarters —— but I'll wait until you get back up here.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, this is your radio reporter, Perley Prescott, of Radio Station LBTY out of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I'm on the scene at the surrender of the English general, Lord Cornwallis, and all his army to our General George Washington and our French allies —— on this historic day —— 19th October 1781 —— at a field just outside the town of York in the state of Virginia. This is the first time I've been alone in our observation station —— All our guests and our advisors are out of here at the moment —— and, perhaps, that is why my full attention is drawn to that broad rank of American soldiers —— as they stand out in front —— shoulder to shoulder —— There must be thousands of them —— as far as I can see —— to my right —— and to my left. They don't look very imposing as far as uniforms go —— They're the same poorly clothed men who straggled through our capital in Philadelphia a few weeks ago —— but, as they stand opposite the smartly dressed French soldiers —— as we contrast them and the bright scarlet of the English soldiers who are marching past them —— and, by the way, in fairness to the English, I must say that the unit that is passing right now is in good marching order —— much more military than the stumbling, staggering group that passed a bit earlier —— but our soldiers —— the men from the 13 states and the Republic of Vermont —— There is a lift in their posture —— They hold their heads —— *all* of them —— with a dignity that is very noticeable. There's a lot of pride out there today, ladies and gentlemen of our large radio audience. I wish there were some way that it could reach out and touch all of you —— just as I can feel it —— actually feel it here this afternoon!

And now (outside noise —— sound effect) with Gideon Roberts back to fill in, I'll be off to the headquarters of General Washington. Gideon, this microphone is yours for exactly two —— make it two and a half —— minutes. By that time, I should begin speaking from a portable microphone down to our left where the generals are. Ready? Thank you, Gideon —— I'll see you later.
GIDEON: Ayuh. (silence) Well —— (silence) Well —— I hope I'm workin' this thing right. It's a lot different than a plough —— or the kinda farm tools I'm used to handlin' —— or aimin' a cannon, eithah. I suppose I do sort of aim my mouth through this thing heah, and it comes out all ovah the place. But I don't talk much —— unless I want to say somethin'. I suppose what I'd wanta say most is that I'm glad —— if that Uncle Daniel fellah is correct —— that this is all ovah. I'd like to tell the folks back home that I'll be comin' home. Maybe I can say hello to the folks around Rutland if they're listenin'. I heard that Doctor Jonas Fay was made sort of ambassador to the states. He's from down Bennington way, but he was our doctor at Ticonderoga —— and maybe I could say hello to him. And —— let's see —— it's kinda strange to see all the leaves on the trees, and this is the middle of October. And ——
RADIO REPORTER: Sir, is that General Rochambeau in front of that group of officers? Thank you, sir. General Rochambeau —— General Rochambeau! I am Perley Prescott of American radio —— Station LBTY out of Philadelphia. Your aide-de-camp told me this morning that I might speak to you this afternoon. Would you say a few words, sir, to folks who are listening in all parts of our country?

"The Capitulation of Gen. Cornwallis at Yorktown, Virginia"* —— *a wallpaper panel from the White House dining room.

ROCHAMBEAU: I welcome, monsieur, the opportunity to make a statement. The French effort —— for your young nation —— comes from many French people —— many people. As a soldier, monsieur, I should be the first to give praise —— and gratitude to le Compte Francois Joseph Paul de Grasse, our admiral. Surely, without de Grasse —— and his 28 ships of the line —— and his brave French seamen who were killed or wounded in the Chesapeake —— we would not have been able to hold Cornwallis in Yorktown. And, for the land forces, I must praise the Marquis de la Fayette who commanded one of General Washington's three divisions. Oh, monsieur, there are so many: de Choisy and Lauzun on the other side of the river; Saint-Simon, whose hot shot set fire to the *CHARON* AND THREE OTHER English ships; although Gimat was outranked by your Alexander Hamilton, his share was very large in the assault on redoubt number 10; as for number 9, this redoubt was conquered by the French —— under General Viomesnil —— and Deux-Ponts and D'Estrade, both now injured —— and Chevalier de Lameth, now crippled in both knees. Oh, there are so many, monsieur! We have proud regiments here today: Bourbonnais, Soissonais, Royal Deux-Ponts, Agenais, Saintonge, Touraine, Gatinais —— my own regiment. I pay homage to everyone! Most of all, monsieur —— and to all who listen —— I must salute your general —— Mon General George Washington and his gallant officers and soldiers! It is an honor, monsieur, to serve under Mon General —— and my soldiers with yours! Vive le Guerre!

RADIO REPORTER: Thank you, General Rochambeau. I know the American people are most grateful to you —— and Compte de Grasse —— and the many French you have just mentioned —— and the French nation —— for your much needed help. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

You have just heard, ladies and gentlemen of our radio audience, a statement by General Rochambeau as we come near the end of the surrender ceremony of the British army under English General Lord Cornwallis to the allies under our

American general, George Washington. General George Washington appears to be in a rather animated discussion with General Steuben and General Benjamin Lincoln —— and I don't think it politic to approach them at this moment. General Steuben is doing much gesticulating, and now General Rochambeau and others are joining the group. I can't guess what this is about —— I'll let you know as soon as I learn something. In the meantime, a military formation of some sort is being arranged —— In fact, my horse —— and the volunteer who is holding him —— are being moved to make room. A number of sergeants —— American sergeants —— are forming a wide rank —— I guess that's what you'd call it —— They're holding their arms up to shoulder height —— and the tips of every sergeant's hand touches the tip of the hand of the other sergeants on each side. There's some shifting as they get that line straight —— It looks very straight. Now they drop their arms. Every sergeant is two arms length from the one beside him. Someone just called the command: Attention! Did you hear it? (pause) 9 —— 10 —— (pause) 23 —— 24 —— 25 —— 26 —— 27 —— 28! There are 28 sergeants standing like 28 statues —— all facing off toward where the last of the English are coming. These English are smarter looking than those we saw earlier. There's a very large throng of onlookers here now —— I would place the number in the thousands —— I don't know where these people could have come from —— from how far —— but I haven't seen such a throng in the capital city of Philadelphia! And there's such an unusual shape to this gathering! It's like a stream flowing into a pond. On the banks are standing people —— They're hardly moving. But, flowing between those onlookers —— military and civilian —— is this stream of scarlet uniforms —— all flowing into this large area where I'm waiting with the allied general staff —— and those statue-like sergeants —— pretty much out front by themselves —— About 20 paces away is the first of them. That discussion around General Washington seems to be over. All are now looking off toward the last of that stream of scarlet English prisoners. We're all waiting now for Lord Cornwallis and his staff. All those erect sergeants add to the tension that seems to be mounting. The last of the foot soldiers are now coming through and being moved off to a sort of large receiving area to the southwest. I was told there'd be as many as eight to nine thousand out there —— and I can believe it —— and I suppose that's where they're turning in their muskets and other materiel.

A hush seems to be coming over this great multitude. There's a feeling of climax. The people-sound is getting softer. I have the strangest kind of sense of —— well, a sort of mixture of excitement, some awe, even a bit of apprehension that I can't explain. I'm sure many people here share these emotions. What looks like a whole cavalry of officers is now about to enter the open area between this enormous ring of witnesses. They are dismounting. I'd say they're about 60, 70 paces from where I am. All are in fresh scarlet English uniforms. There's a wagon there now —— but I didn't see it brought in —— or from where. From the back of the wagon, one officer is giving the others a long case —— That's what it must be, ladies and gentlemen! Those must be the "cased colors" that I heard argued about in the surrender terms. Yes, they're the cased colors! Every officer in the group seems to have a case. They're standing around and don't seem to know how to handle them in a uniform manner. There's an American —— He seems to be too young to be an officer —— but he's not a soldi...

VOICE: That's Ensign Robert Wilson —— He's just 18.

RADIO REPORTER: Did you hear that, ladies and gentlemen? Ensign Wilson is approaching the English officers. He's speaking to them and pointing to the American sergeants. Ensign Wilson is coming back to the sergeants. (pause) He's now standing beside the sergeant closest to us. He's pacing off in the front. At six paces in front of the sergeants, he stops —— and turns to the right. Now the English officers are coming up —— They seem to be captains! —— Each captain is facing one sergeant —— There must be exactly 28 English captains —— and they are —— each one facing an American sergeant —— six paces away. Now they're laying down those cased colors. It's all done very quickly. The English are forming into a column. The sergeants still stand at attention, but few people are looking at them now. All eyes are now on a lone figure who has stepped out from a cluster of English officers. He has drawn his sword and holds it with the palms of

both hands facing up. It must be General Cornwallis. An officer from General Washington's group has just passed me —— I suppose he's been assigned to escort General Cornwallis. The American officer has reached Cornwallis. He's taken a position to his left —— about a half step to his rear. That's strange if he's an escort —— but that's the way they are! And that's the way they are now marching! And they're going to come right by us. The general is turning to his ——
VOICE: Which one is Rochambeau?
SECOND VOICE: He is ——
RADIO REPORTER: Did you hear that, ladies and gentlemen? I'm sure that general spoke with an Irish accent. He certainly doesn't sound like any Englishman I ever —— Look! He's offering his sword to General Rochambeau! He's offering his sword to —— Rochambeau won't take it! —— Rochambeau is pointing his finger toward General Washington! Cornwallis —— or whoever he is —— is walking toward General Washington. Now General Washington is pointing toward General Lincoln! That English general —— it can't be Cornwallis! —— is changing direction again and is approaching General Lincoln. He gives the sword to Lincoln. There are some words. General Lincoln seems to be smiling, and he gives the sword back! Ladies and gentlemen of our radio audience, this is all very confusing, but this is just the way I'm seeing it. I have a strong suspicion about what just took place here, and I'm going to ask General Washington himself if he'll help clear this up. Just stay tuned while I approach the general. (pause) General Washington? Sir? General Washington? Please, sir? General, will you speak to the American nation at this very great moment? All 13 states —— even the Republic of Vermont —— are tuned in to hear your voice. First, may I ask a burning question? Why didn't General Cornwallis approach you first?
GENERAL WASHINGTON: That was not Cornwallis. Out of insolence to our people, he sent General O'Hara with instructions to make it appear that this is a *French* victory. He told O'Hara to say he is ill. That's rubbish! A general is not ill —— in victory —— *less* in defeat! Cornwallis couldn't face what he considers to be a deep humiliation: the turnabout —— the deserved comeuppance after some brutal victories —— the admission of a complete defeat to the field representative of our United States. Well, this is not the first defeat of a proud Englishman; we took "Gentleman John" Burgoyne just four years ago, and we'll score again! I'm sure that in London Lord North and Lord Germaine will do some hard thinking when they learn of today's business. But —— trusting in the Almighty God's good plan for our nation —— we will overcome General Clinton just as we have taken these others! Last month, sir, I visited my home in Mount Vernon for the first time in six years —— I long to return in peace. But I will remain with my gallant forces for another six years until, eventually, we will prevail. My countrymen throughout our dear nation, please understand that this is a moment of soul-stirring emotions: indignation at the English attempt to insult our nation; gratitude to Compte de Grasse, General Rochambeau —— there are so many French —— General Rochambeau told me he has given a statement thanking all of them by name —— I join him in that —— and commanders from other lands: von Steuben and Kosciusko and so many Irish. There is *pride*, too, in our own gallant officers and men: my dear Knox, who has served so long and so well —— again, we have so many brave men —— so many sacrifices have been made. Finally, there is a deep thankfulness to the Almighty God and recognition that we have been blessed. I believe that the squall last Tuesday —— that doomed Cornwallis's breakout —— was an act of Divine Providence. So, I will issue general orders tomorrow that, the following day being the Sabbath, Divine Services of Thanksgiving be held in every brigade. Thank you, sir, for the opportunity to speak to our Congress and all others who have supported us —— and to those who have not. This is a time for forgiveness and coming together. Long live our beloved nation!

Footnote: This play was written after a discussion during a meeting of the Publication Committee of this Quarterly. The two hundredth anniversary in September, 1981, of the Yorktown Surrender was approaching. Editor Michael Austin suggested, "Why not write a play about it?" This is the result. The play received a merit award at the Annual Meeting of the Vermont Historical Society in 1982.

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY OF THE

Daughters of the American Revolution

YORKTOWN BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

THIS CERTIFICATE IS PRESENTED TO

Tom Kieran Egan

IN RECOGNITION OF

his contribution to the celebration of the Yorktown Bicentennial in Rutland.

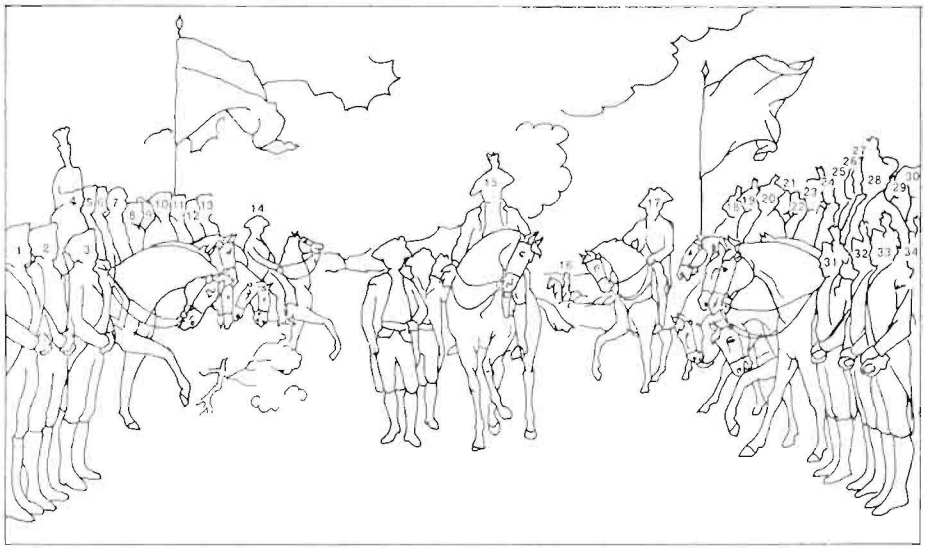
Patricia A. Kelly
PRESIDENT GENERAL NSDAR

October 19, 1981
DATE

NATIONAL CHAIRMAN YORKTOWN BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Beryl Dodd
CHAIRMAN YORKTOWN BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

John Trumbull's Surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown (below: identification key)



Trumbull's Yorktown portrait depicts some 38 principal soldiers in the foreground, as well as rows of cavalry and artillery in the background. To the left are the French allies; to the right are the American forces attended by the "stars and stripes". The central figure in the painting is General Lincoln, and to left are three British officers. While the French and American officers have been identified by more than one historian, the British participants are left unnamed — though presumably one is O'Hara.

1. Either Christian, Marquis de Deux-Ponts, or his brother, Guillaume, comte de Deux-Ponts, both of whom were present at the surrender. Both held rank of Colonel, later Lieutenant-General.
2. Identified in the key to Trumbull's painting as Brig. Mattieu Paul Louis — Vicomte de Laval or Duke de Laval Montmorency. Recent French sources indicate that Anne Alexandre Marie Sulpice Joseph de Montmorency, Duke de Laval, was a brigadier in Rochambeau's army and present at Yorktown. It is possible that the Laval-Montmorency in Trumbull's painting is the latter.
3. Brig. Adam Philippe, Comte de Custine.
4. Brig. Duc de Lauzun. French sources identify an Armand Louis de Gontaut Biron, who was Duke of Lauzun after 1788, and who served under Rochambeau as an infantry colonel. Unfortunately, he was guillotined in 1794.
5. Lt. Gen. Claude Gabriel de Choisy.
6. Marechal-de-Camp du Houx, Marquis de Viomenil.
7. Lt. Gen. Claude Anne de Rouvroy, Marquis de Saint Simon, landed with the fleet of Admiral de Grasse to aid Washington and Rochambeau.
8. Col. Hans Axel, Comte de Fersen, Aide-de-Camp to Rochambeau.
9. Col. Joseph Francois Louis Charles Cesar, Comte, later Duc, de Damas D'Antigny, another Aide-de-Camp.
10. Maj. Gen. Francois Jean Chevalier de Chastellux.
11. Gen. Antoine Charles du Houx, Baron de Viomenil.
12. Adm. Louis, Comte de Barras.
13. Adm. Francois Joseph Paul, Comte de Grasse-Tilly. De Grasse's children moved to America after the family fortune was ruined by the French Revolution.
14. Lt. Gen. Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, Comte de Rochambeau, General-in-Chief of French forces.
15. Maj. Gen. Benjamin Lincoln, Washington's second-in command, who accepted the sword of surrender.
16. Lt. Col. Ebenezer Stevens, 2nd Continental Artillery.
17. General George Washington, Commander-in-Chief of American forces.
18. Thomas Nelson, Jr., Governor of Virginia and Commander of the Virginia State Forces.
19. Maj. Gen. Marie du Matier Marquis de la Fayette.
20. Maj. Gen. Friedrich, Baron von Steuben, named Inspector-General of the Continental Army in charge of training Washington's troops.
21. Lt. Col. David Cobb, Aide-de-Camp to Washington.
22. Lt. Col. Jonathan Trumbull, Jr., Military Secretary to Washington.
23. Brig. Gen. James Clinton, the father of DeWitt Clinton.
24. Brig. Gen. Mordecai Gist.
25. Brig. Gen. (Mad) Anthony Wayne.
26. Brig. Gen. Edward Hand, Adjutant General.
27. Brig. Gen. John Muhlenberg.
28. Brig. Gen. Henry Knox, Chief of Artillery, later first Secretary of War under Washington.
29. Lt. Col. Ebenezer Huntington, 3rd Connecticut Regt., acting Aide-de-Camp to Lincoln.
30. Col. Timothy Pickering, Quartermaster-General.
31. Lt. Col. Alexander Hamilton, principal Aide-de-Camp to Washington.
32. Lt. Col. John Laurens, Aide-de-Camp to Washington.
33. Col. Walter Stewart (Stuart), 2nd Pennsylvania Regt.
34. Maj. Nicholas Fish, 2nd New York Regt.

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
101 CENTER STREET, RUTLAND, VERMONT 05701
(802)775-2006; 775-0179

The Rutland Historical Society was founded in 1969 to preserve, study and disseminate the history of the original Town of Rutland as chartered by New Hampshire Governor Benning Wentworth in 1761, now comprised of the City of Rutland (1892) and the Towns of Rutland (1761), Proctor (1886) and West Rutland (1886). The Society maintains and operates The Rutland Museum in the historic Bank of Rutland building built in 1825, now owned by the City of Rutland, and The Vermont Farm and Rural Life Museum at the Vermont State Fair. A research library and the historical collections are maintained in the Museums and the historic Nickwackett Fire Station. Gifts or bequests of articles of historical interest or money are welcome at all times and are deductible for income tax purposes.

The Society publishes the Rutland Historical Society Quarterly for the members and presents public historical programs throughout the year at the Rutland Free Library in the Nella Grimm Fox Room.

Membership in the Society is open to all upon payment of dues to the Membership Secretary, Hope E. Hubbard, 248 Lincoln Avenue, Rutland, Vermont 05701. Membership entitles each member to a subscription to four issues each year of the Quarterly, a copy of the Annual Report, the right to vote at business meetings and the benefits of supporting the Museums, monthly programs, library and collections. Dues are $3.00 a year for regular members and $5.00 for a family membership; for those wishing to give the Society further support a contributing membership is $10.00; a sponsor membership is $25.00; a sustaining membership is $100.00 (minimum); and a life membership (one payment only) is $100.00. Members wishing to pay two or more years' dues in advance are encouraged to do so to reduce costs. The expiration date of each membership is listed on the mailing label of the publication. Please send change of address on Postal Service Form 3576 (a postcard available free of charge at your local post office).

Manuscripts are invited; address correspondence to the Editor.

Editor: Michael L. Austin
Managing Editor: Jean C. Ross

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